

STRATEGIES TO EFFECTIVELY CONTROL ABSENTEEISM

EXECUTIVE PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

The problem examined was a union contract for Niles Fire Department (NFD) personnel is being negotiated for the first time. One of the contract items to be negotiated is a sick leave policy. It is unknown whether the present sick leave policy should be changed in order to effectively control absenteeism under the new contract.

The purpose of this research project was to determine whether the present NFD sick leave policy needs to be changed in order to effectively control absenteeism under the new contract. Six research questions were developed to assist in accomplishing the purpose of this project. Descriptive and evaluative research was used to answer these research questions:

1. What adverse effects does absenteeism have on an organization?
2. What are the necessary components of an effective sick leave policy?
3. Does the current NFD sick leave policy contain these components?
4. Is the current NFD sick leave policy effective?
5. If the answer to question # 3 or 4 is “no”, what changes need to be made to the current NFD sick leave policy so that it will be effective?
6. How do other fire departments in Illinois manage absenteeism?

The procedures employed to complete this research included a review of applicable literature including a survey of 187 fire departments from throughout Illinois. This was augmented with a more comprehensive survey sent to 27 local fire departments.

The results of this research indicated that the present NFD policy is highly ineffective. NFD personnel utilize sick leave at an alarmingly higher rate than personnel from other departments. The policy is lacking in the components necessary for an effective policy.

The recommendations that resulted from this research projected included the mandate that management must develop a comprehensive policy that incorporates a number of elements aimed at controlling absenteeism. Included in this policy must be both incentives for good attendance and disincentives for poor attendance.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem is a union contract for Niles Fire Department (NFD) personnel is being negotiated for the first time. One of the contract items to be negotiated is a sick leave policy. It is unknown whether the present sick leave policy should be changed in order to effectively control absenteeism under the new contract.

Prior to the unionization of NFD line personnel, management had the right to unilaterally alter existing policies. However, once the vote to unionize the NFD was ratified by the Illinois Labor Relations Board in April of 2001, management and labor are now required by law to collectively bargain certain conditions of employment. One of those issues that must be negotiated is a sick leave policy.

“Leave provisions are usually the lengthiest clauses in a firefighter’s collective bargaining agreement” (Aitchison, 1994, p. 69). Furthermore, sick leave policies can vary substantially between different fire departments. As an example, the following is actual contract language that illustrates just how diverse policies on absenteeism can be. One sample contract states that “sick leave with pay, can be granted upon the approval of the Fire Chief in the case of a bona fide illness or injury of an employee” (Whitmore, 1994, p. 56). In contrast, a second contract states that,

Sick pay is pay to the employee for the necessary absence from duty on a regularly scheduled workday because of illness, injury, or exposure to contagious disease not in the course of his/her employment, or the illness in the employee’s immediate family that necessitates his/her absence from work... (Aitchison, 1994, p. 70).

Clearly, it is critically important for management to decide on a sick leave policy that can effectively control absenteeism. Thus, the purpose of this research project is to determine

whether the present sick leave policy needs to be changed in order to effectively control absenteeism under the new contract. Six research questions were developed in an attempt to assist the author in accomplishing the purpose of this project. Descriptive and evaluative research will be used to answer these research questions:

1. What adverse effects does absenteeism have on an organization?
2. What are the necessary components of an effective sick leave policy?
3. Does the current NFD sick leave policy contain these components?
4. Is the current NFD sick leave policy effective?
5. If the answer to question # 3 or 4 is “no”, what changes need to be made to the current NFD sick leave policy so that it will be effective?
6. How do other fire departments in Illinois manage absenteeism?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Village of Niles Fire Department provides a multitude of services to a community of 30,068 people. These services include fire prevention, fire suppression, fire investigation, emergency medical treatment and transport, special rescue, hazardous materials response, and public education. When at full strength, the department consists of 52 sworn personnel, a civilian administrative assistant, and a civilian records clerk. Of the 52 sworn personnel 48, equally divided between three platoons, are assigned to a 24/48 shift schedule. This includes three District Chiefs, nine Lieutenants, nine Fire Apparatus Engineers, and 27 Firefighter/Paramedics. The remaining four sworn personnel are the Fire Chief, the Deputy Fire Chief, and two Fire Inspectors assigned to the Fire Prevention Bureau. These individuals work an 8/40 work schedule. The department operates two engines, two ambulances, and one aerial ladder out of

two stations. The established minimum manning level for this complement of apparatus is 12 personnel. Additionally, when available a District Chief responds in a command unit. During times when a NFD District Chief is unavailable, command coverage is provided by one of two neighboring departments through a prearranged agreement.

Under the current policies regarding furlough selection and the assignment of work reduction days, a maximum of three personnel are allowed off on any given shift. As a result of this policy, in 2000, 250 out of the 366 days in the year were staffed by 12 personnel. Furthermore, 40 out of the 366 days in the year were staffed by 13 personnel. The minimum staffing level for line personnel for the NFD is 12 personnel.

In April of 2001, the members of the NFD voted to unionize the line personnel of the department with Teamsters Local 726. Prior to this unionization, village officials were able to make unilateral adjustments to any existing policy including the policy on absenteeism. However, Illinois labor law requires that the village now must bargain a policy on absenteeism with the firefighters' union. Furthermore, any future changes to the resulting policy will need to be bargained between labor and management. For this reason alone, it is imperative that management decide upon an acceptable policy on absenteeism. Additionally, absenteeism has historically been a difficult issue for administrators within the Village of Niles. As recently as June of 1999, the following sick leave policy clarification was issued by the Village Board of Trustees and incorporated into the Village of Niles Employee Handbook (1997):

When the Village of Niles initially established the six (6) month non-duty injury sick policy, the intent was to provide protection for the employee and his/her family against the event of catastrophic illness. At the time of implementation, recovery time was much longer for many illnesses such as heart attack or gallbladder surgery than today.

The Village does not intend to change the policy. However, the policy was never intended to be available to employees to provide unlimited “sick time” for colds, stomachaches, sprains, bruises and other minor ailments incurred in the course of every day living. While the Village does pay employees for time off for these incidents, it does not expect the privilege to be abused by the employees. Chronic abuse by an employee of 1, 2, or 3 day absences preclude many departments from performing daily missions effectively.

Individuals who, at the discretion of the Department Management, Village Manager, Human Resources; and, ultimately, the Mayor, are deemed to be abusing the absence policy, will be dealt with appropriately up to and including termination of employment

For example, Department Heads may conclude that sick leave is being abused when a suspicious pattern of sick leave usage exists (i.e. Fridays, Mondays, and the days before and after holidays) or where the employee’s use of sick leave exceeds the average number of days taken by other Village employees.

The above language does not mean that someone who uses more sick leave than the Village average is automatically deemed an abuser. It does mean, however, that the Department Heads will look closely at such situations (p. 47A).

Finally, the importance of a well devised and managed sick leave policy is apparent when one considers the adverse effects that absenteeism has on any organization. Thus, the purpose of this research project is to determine whether the present sick leave policy needs to be changed in order to effectively control absenteeism under the new contract.

This research project is being conducted in accordance with the applied research requirement of the Executive Planning (EP) class in the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. The topic being addressed relates directly to a major segment of the course. Specifically, from the Executive Planning course Student Manual (2000), strategic planning is defined as "the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future" (p. 4-8). Given the current situation within the Niles Fire Department, strategic planning regarding the issue of a policy on absenteeism is critical.

Additionally, the unit on analysis in the Executive Planning course, dealt with the gathering, summarizing and evaluating of data to aid in proper decision making. Skills discussed and learned during this unit were utilized by the author during this project.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review was to collect and examine applicable information on the effects of absenteeism on an organization and the necessary components of an effective sick leave policy. Furthermore, research was conducted to determine what other fire departments within Illinois have done in an attempt to manage the issue of absenteeism.

Burkell (1985) wrote that the effects of sick leave can be devastating. He went on to detail that sick leave can decrease company manning and strength, implicate additional dollars to pay for overtime when minimum-manning agreements exist, reduce the effectiveness of training programs and company harmony, and create poor morale. Finally, Burkell, cautioned that an entitlement mentality can develop within an organization wherein members feel that they, too, are entitled to take time off even in the absence of any illness.

According to Levy (2001), work absences cost U.S. employers an estimated 17 percent of payroll costs. This often results in massive budget overruns for public employers. He further adds that there are frequently additional uncounted costs such as lost productivity and decreased customer services.

Hagstrom (2000) stated that unscheduled leave can have the following affects on an organization:

- The employee who is absent from work must be paid.
- A second employee often must be paid overtime to cover for the first.
- The second employee frequently becomes more exhausted. That employee may have an elevated risk of contracting a legitimate illness.
- Other employees may conclude that he or she is “entitled” to a sick day independent of whether or not they are actually ill.
- Supervisors must take time from other tasks to make adjustments or phone calls to cover for absent employees.
- Employees may experience anger, stress or resentment because they believe someone is abusing sick leave.
- Management may be resented by employees if they perceive nothing is being done to curtail sick leave abuse by the “bad” employees. They may believe that the “good” employees, receive no reward for being ethical and coming to work. Further, they may perceive the “bad” employees are, in effect, rewarded for bad behavior. Since “bad” employees get paid days off, simply by calling in sick, whenever they want without having to go through the usual channels.

- Employees who are overworked because of others' absences may be more likely to make mistakes.

In light of the adverse affects absenteeism can have on an organization as indicated by the literature, it is important to examine what components are necessary for an effective sick leave policy.

Hagstrom (2000) indicated that it is imperative for a sick leave policy to “actively discourage or penalize abuse” (p. 53). Otherwise, if a policy enables abuse, it may actually encourage such abuse. Further, policies that enable frequent absences reward the wrong people. Those employees who rarely utilize sick leave get an empty benefit and must also bear the burden of other employees' absences. Finally, Hagstrom cautioned that it is critical for all employees to “recognize the sick-leave benefit comes with an implied ‘if and only if’ clause – they are entitled to it if and only if they have a medical problem that compels them to miss work. Instead, they believe they are entitled to use the leave, whether they are sick or not” (p. 53).

According to Gentleman (1993), The City of Orlando (FL) Fire Department dealt with the issue of reforming their absenteeism policy in 1986. One main element of the developed policy is a “carrot-and stick” (p. 85) approach. The policy also clearly defines the conditions under which sick leave may be taken. Finally, the policy makes it more difficult to take unwarranted sick leave and offers rewards for exemplary attendance. This reward approach provides employees with a reason to monitor their own sick leave usage.

This approach of providing incentives to reward desired behavior was, according to McCormick (2000), a basic management tenet of the Founding Father of American Business - Benjamin Franklin. Franklin made it a habit to look for methods to provide rewards in honor of

good performance. He employed this reward for good performance practice regularly. He was a firm believer that these rewards served to encourage the wanted behavior to continue.

Dr. B. F. Skinner (1953), one of the most prominent behavioral science researchers of the 20th century, held similar views to Benjamin Franklin. Through his extensive research, Skinner came to believe that positive reinforcement can significantly increase the probability of the reoccurrence of the particular behavior. Additionally, Skinner proposed that actions can also be strengthened by negative reinforcement. In negative reinforcement, a particular behavior is encouraged because of the removal of an aversive stimulus. For example, an employee's desired actions would be reinforced if, by performing that desired action, the employee's supervisor ceased to reprimand the employee. The removal of the negative reinforcement, the supervisor's reprimands, would serve to strengthen the employee's desired behavior. While both positive and negative reinforcement can be effective, Skinner favored the former much more than the latter.

Lawson (1990) wrote:

It has been said that an organization gets the attendance it expects, or the absenteeism it accepts. Employees generally regard work attendance and absence in the same light as the organization's management.

If the prevailing culture about attendance in the organization is one that values good attendance - management sets expectations, recognizes good attendance, pays attention to all absences, and deals with related problems directly - then the attendance level of most employees will be good.

On the other hand, if the prevailing attendance culture is one in which no standards for attendance exist - good attendance is not recognized, absences go

unnoticed, and action is taken only in the most extreme cases - then employee attendance is generally less than satisfactory (p.91).

Lawson (1990) further stated that for an organization to control absenteeism it must, therefore, set attendance expectations, recognize good attendance, pay attention to all absences, and deal with problems directly and swiftly. He stated that if an organization fails in these areas, it can expect less than satisfactory employee attendance rates.

Frederiksen (1982) wrote that “an effective attendance management system (AMS) will consist of three main components: an absence control program, an attendance reinforcement program, and a set of administrative procedures to insure that both programs are administered properly over time.” (p.380). Frederiksen further stated that the absence control program should consist of progressive disciplinary steps when an employee’s absenteeism exceeds established criteria.

In regards to an attendance reinforcement program, Frederiksen wrote that “it can help excellent attenders maintain their excellence, it can encourage average attenders to improve toward excellence (rather than to play attendance roulette, maintaining attendance that hovers near but just better than the organization’s definition of unacceptable), and it can encourage poor attenders to improve beyond the point needed to merely escape discipline. In short, an attendance reinforcement program can be an eminently practical endeavor for management if it is designed to be cost effective.” (p. 382-383).

Finally, Frederiksen stressed the importance of effective administration of both the absence control program and the attendance reinforcement program. Specifically, he cautioned that both programs need to be followed uniformly and equitably. However, some legitimate deviations need to be allowed for under circumstances that cannot be predicted. He cited the

example of a worker being absent because he stopped to help save the life of a fellow commuter involved in a highway accident.

Famularo (1986) concurred with Frederiksen that progressive discipline, up to and including termination, is necessary to control absenteeism. He further agreed with the other cited works that “most employees respond to positive demonstrations of appreciation and recognition for their excellent attendance, such as verbal commendations or letters or certificates of appreciation and recognition from management” (p. 60-14).

The literature indicated that one advisable components of a sick leave policy should be a recognition mechanism for good attendance. Fire departments from throughout Illinois have incorporated this technique into their absenteeism policies. Specifically, according to the 2001 Illinois Professional Firefighters Association (IPFA) Wages and Working Conditions survey, the following statistics reflect how fire departments from across the state handle the sick leave issue. Of the 273 fire departments within Illinois, 187 responded to the survey. Of those that responded, 168 provide a definitive number of sick days per year. The average number of days allowed is 8. Furthermore, 158 of the reporting departments allow for accrual of sick days. The average number of days that these departments allow personnel to accrue is 67.

Of all the responding departments, 39 do not offer any buy back provision for unused sick days upon retirement. The remaining departments, 131 in all, do offer a buy back provision. The buy back is administered in a wide variety of ways by departments throughout the state. Some departments offer a direct cash payment for unused sick time upon the retirement of an employee. The percentage of payment for unused time ranges from approximately 20% to 100%. Some departments, in lieu of a straight cash payment, let the employee convert unused sick time into health insurance premium payments during retirement. Once again, the value attached to the

accrued sick time varies considerably between departments. Other departments permit the accrued sick time to be utilized as compensatory time. This, in effect, allows for an earlier retirement date for the affected employee.

In summary, the actual value and method of the reward procedure varies considerably between departments within Illinois. However, 70.1% of the departments that responded to the IPFA Wages and Working Conditions survey do have a good attendance reward facet to their sick leave policies.

PROCEDURES

The purpose of this research project is to determine effective strategies that can be instituted to control excessive sick leave usage. Descriptive, historical, and evaluative research methodologies were utilized. The procedures employed to complete this research project consisted of a literature review and a survey regarding the sick leave policies of other local fire departments.

Literature Review

The literature review was initiated at the National Emergency Training Center's Learning Resource Center in August of 2001. Further literature searches were conducted, from September of 2001 through December of 2001, at the public libraries in Park Ridge, Illinois and Niles, Illinois. Additional literature was reviewed at the Northwestern University Library in Evanston, Illinois. Finally, during that same time period, additional information was acquired from both the researcher's personal library and the Niles Fire Department's library. Textbooks, journals, magazines and websites were examined during the research process. Pertinent sources were included in the Literature Review portion of this paper.

Sick Leave Policy Survey

In order to examine sick leave policy issues of other local fire departments, a survey was developed. The intention of the survey was to determine the specifics of each department's sick leave policy. Additionally, information was requested that was aimed at determining the effectiveness of each policy in controlling excessive sick leave usage. A fax cover sheet (Appendix C), a survey cover letter (Appendix D), and the survey (Appendix E) were faxed to the sixteen local fire departments that belong to Division III of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System on November 12, 2001. These sixteen departments are Deerfield Bannockburn Fire Protection District (FPD), Evanston Fire Department (FD), Glencoe FD, Glenview FD, Highland Park FD, Highwood FD, Lincolnwood FD, Morton Grove FD, Northbrook FD, Northfield FD, North Maine FPD, Park Ridge FD, Prospect Heights FD, Skokie FD, Wilmette FD, and Winnetka FD. Of the sixteen surveys sent out, twelve were completed and returned.

To increase the size of the survey, this author faxed the same fax cover sheet, survey cover letter, and survey to an additional seventeen local fire departments on December 5, 2001. These seventeen departments are Arlington Heights FD, Barrington FD, Buffalo Grove FD, Crystal Lake FD, Des Plaines FD, Elk Grove FD, Franklin Park FD, Hoffman Estates FD, Lake Forest FD, Lake Zurich FD, Lincolnshire-Riverwoods FPD, Mount Prospect FD, Mundelein FD, Palatine FD, Rolling Meadows FD, Schaumburg FD, and Wheeling FD. Fifteen of these surveys were completed and returned. In total, of the 33 surveys sent out, 27 were completed and returned. The results from the survey have been summarized in Appendixes F, G, and H.

Assumptions

It has been assumed that the respondents to the survey understood each of the questions asked and were knowledgeable enough about their sick leave policy to respond accurately.

Additionally, it was assumed that the respondents were honest, thorough, and unbiased in their answers.

This researcher further assumed that the reported sick leave usage from the surveyed departments over a three year period fairly represented the incidence of absenteeism in each department and was not artificially impacted by any unusual event or factor. Finally, this researcher also made the assumption that the information obtained from the literature review was factual.

Limitations

The current relationship between labor and management within the NFD is strained. It is beyond the scope of this research project to attempt to explain the reasons for the current state of affairs. However, because of the present situation within the department, this author was prevented from utilizing a survey instrument targeting the NFD line personnel.

The project was further limited by this researcher lack of statistical expertise. A more detailed data analysis may have been able to establish a strong correlation between sick leave usage and other variables of sick leave policies. Clearly this would have been beneficial to this project.

Definitions

Absenteeism. The failure of an employee, regardless of the reason, to report for or remain at work as scheduled.

Buyback. The provision whereby an employer offers reimbursement to an employee for allotted but unused sick time.

8/40 Work Schedule. A schedule consisting of five 8 hour days per week. This results in a 40 hour work week.

Hireback. The allocating of overtime to an employee who works extra duty.

Line Personnel. The Firefighters and Lieutenants assigned to 24/48 shift schedule.

Light Duty. Work that requires only minimal physical exertion and which can be accomplished by an injured or ill employee without risk to the employee's recuperation process and without potential risk of harm to others.

Off The Job Illness Or Injury. An illness or injury that occurs to an employee while not at the primary place of employment.

On The Job Illness Or Injury. An illness or injury that occurs to an employee while not at the primary place of employment and directly related to and caused by the performance of the employee's assigned duties.

24/48 Shift Schedule. A schedule consisting of a 24 hour period of work followed by 48 hours of off duty time. This rotation repeats every 21 calendar days.

Sick Leave. The failure of an employee, regardless of the reason, to report for or remain at work as scheduled.

RESULTS

The literature review indicated that absenteeism has significant adverse affects on an organization. From a budgetary standpoint, absenteeism results in additional overtime expenditures to provide coverage for the absent employee. According to Levy (2001), an estimated 17 percent of payroll costs can be attributed to absenteeism. He further stated that there are additional uncounted cost of sick leave, such as lost productivity and decreased customer services, that impact an organization.

For the NFD, the following overtime costs can be directly attributed to absenteeism. In any given year, the vast majority of days are staffed by the minimum operational compliment of line personnel. For example, during 2000, only 10.9% of the days throughout the year were staffed with more line personnel than the minimum required. As indicated in Appendix I, for 1999, \$68,528 was spent on overtime due to absenteeism. For 2000, this figure was \$90,102. Finally for 2001 the amount spent on hirebacks caused by absenteeism was \$198,604.

An additional cost of sick leave is the salary paid to an employee when that employee was absent. For 1999, the NFD paid \$109,804 in salary to employees while on sick leave. For 2000, this figure was \$115,834. Finally for 2001, this cost was \$160,581.

When these costs are combined the total cost of absenteeism to the NFD was \$178,332 for 1999, \$205,936 for 2000 and \$359,185 for 2001. When these expenditures are compared to the entire NFD compensation totals for each year it equates to 5.62% for 1999, 6.49% for 2000, and 11.32% for 2001.

As stated by Burkell (1985), absenteeism also reduces the effectiveness of training programs, contributes to poor overall morale, and disrupts employee harmony. Additionally, absenteeism can create a feeling of entitlement among all employees. Even when an employee is not ill or injured, that employee may feel that they are entitled to a sick day because others are utilizing sick leave.

Depending on the prevalence of absenteeism, Hagstrom (2000) warned that those employees working extra shifts to cover for the absent employee, can become stressed and fatigued. Furthermore, absenteeism invariably causes an increase in the workload of supervisors because time must be spent filling and more closely managing the opening left by the absent employee.

An effective sick leave policy should, according to Hagstrom (2000), “actively discourage or penalize abuse” (p. 53). It is imperative that employees realize sick leave benefits are to be utilized only when they are actually ill. A sick leave policy that allows frequent absences, in effect, reward the wrong people.

In addition to the punishment facet of a sick leave policy, the literature indicated that a reward factor is important. According to Gentleman (1993), the City of Orlando (FL) Fire Department employs a carrot-stick approach. In addition to making it difficult to take unwarranted sick leave, rewards are offered for excellent attendance.

Dr. Skinner (1953) maintained that through both positive and negative reinforcement one’s behavior can be both influenced and changed. He believed that positive reinforcement was more powerful and, therefore, preferable to negative reinforcement.

According to McCormick (2000), Benjamin Franklin concurred with Skinner’s viewpoint in regards to positive reinforcement. Franklin made it a practice to reward desired behaviors in others. He felt that reinforced and encouraged continued good behavior.

Furthermore, Lawson (1990), wrote that it is important that management set and communicate reasonable expectations about attendance and deal with attendance problems directly and swiftly. This, in his view, helps to establish a culture that supports good attendance within the organization.

Frederiksen (1982) and Famularo (1986) both stressed the importance of not only recognizing exemplary attendance but also the utilization progressive discipline, up to and including termination, to control absenteeism.

The present sick leave policy of the NFD allows for an employee on sick leave with an off-the-job injury or illness to receive full pay for 26 weeks. For an on-the-job injury, an

employee receives full pay, with no loss of benefits, for one year. Additionally, there is no limit to number of individual occurrences of absenteeism an employee is entitled to within any given time frame.

Additionally, there are a limited number of penalties for being absent contained in the policy. The policy does require a medical certificate after a firefighter misses two or more continuous 24 hour tours of duty. Furthermore, an employee is prohibited, while on sick leave from the department, from working outside of their village employment.

The present NFD sick leave policy does not have, in place, a mechanism by which to reward exemplary attendance. An employee who has never utilized sick leave is treated the same as an employee who has been absent on numerous occasions. Furthermore, the policy does not clearly establish or communicate any reasonable expectations about attendance. In the Village of Niles Employee Handbook (1997) it is stated that “Department Heads may conclude that sick leave is being abused ... where the employee’s use of sick leave exceeds the average number of days taken by other Village employees.” (p. 47A). However, the policy further reads that this language “does not mean that someone who uses more sick leave than the Village average is automatically deemed an abuser. It does mean, however, that the Department Heads will look closely at such situations” (p. 47A).

Finally, there is no clearly defined progressive discipline measures contained in the sick leave policy. There is merely a statement that indicates an employee who falsely claims a medical disability or injury shall be discharged.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the current NFD sick leave policy, the chart contained in Appendix F was developed. It summarizes the average number of sick days/employee/year for the 27 departments that responded to the survey for calendar years 1998,

1999, and 2000. The average number of sick days/employee/year for NFD personnel is also indicated in the chart.

During 1998, the average number of sick days/employee for the 27 departments that responded to the survey was 2.9. For NFD personnel the average number of sick days/employee was 4.6. This equates to a 58.6% greater use of sick leave by NFD personnel as compared to the personnel from the 27 departments that responded to the survey.

For 1999, the average number of sick days/employee for the responding departments was 2.8. For NFD personnel the average number of sick days/employee was 4.3. Thus, for 1999, NFD personnel had a 53.5% higher incidence of absenteeism than that of the other departments.

In 2000, the average number of sick days/employee for the responding departments declined slightly to 2.7. Conversely, the average number of sick days/employee for the NFD rose to 5.1. NFD personnel therefore utilized an average of 88.9% more sick leave than the personnel from the other 27 departments.

When the figures from all three years are combined, the average number of sick days/employee/year for the responding departments was 2.8. The average number of sick days/employee/year for the NFD was 4.7. This equates to a 67.9% greater use of sick leave by NFD personnel as compared to the personnel from the 27 departments that responded to the survey over the same three year period.

The surveys were sent to the responding departments prior to the conclusion of 2001. Therefore, data from the surveyed departments indicating sick leave usage for 2001 is not included in this report. However, it should be noted that, for 2001, NFD personnel used an average of 9.4 sick days/employee. When this figure is compared to the overall average number

of sick days/employee/year for the responding departments over the three year period of 1998, 1999, and 2000, it equates to a 235.7% greater usage of sick leave by NFD personnel.

Clearly NFD personnel have a significantly higher rate of absenteeism than the personnel from the 27 other fire departments. Based on the presented data, it would be difficult to dispute the ineffectiveness of the NFD sick leave policy.

The current NFD policy on absenteeism is lacking in a number of the components necessary for an effective sick leave policy. The policy does not establish or effectively communicate any expectations regarding employee attendance. There are, within the policy, very few deterrents to discourage an employee for taking sick leave. In conjunction with this issue, the policy is lacking any progressive disciplinary measures to utilize in managing absenteeism. An absent employee is not penalized to any significant degree. Further, the present policy does not reward stellar attendance in any way. In order to make the current NFD policy more effective, these lacking elements must be incorporated into a modified policy.

The chart in Appendix G summarizes the manner in which the surveyed departments handle the issue of whether to allot a given number of paid sick days/year. Additionally, the chart indicates if the number of accrued sick days is capped and, if so, at what amount. The third column shows how each department deals with the accrued sick days at an employee's retirement. Finally, the last column depicts the maximum number of reimbursable sick days at retirement. This figure is calculated by factoring in the percentage of reimbursement with the maximum number of sick days one can accrue. Some departments directly reimburse the retiring employee. Other departments, those indicated by the superscript, convert the value due to the retiring employee into health insurance premium payments.

Similar to the result from the earlier cited IAFF Wages and Working Conditions survey, the overwhelming majority of the surveyed departments allot a given number of allowed paid sick days/year. All but 1 of the 27 surveyed departments employ this mechanism. The average number of sick days allocated per year is 6.2. The median value is 6. The range of the maximum number of sick days an employee is allowed to accrue is from 0 to unlimited. Similarly, the rate of reimbursement of accrued sick days at retirement ranges from 0% to 100%. When the number of accrued days allowed is factored together with the reimbursement rate, the final reimbursement value ranges from 0 to 144 days. The average of these reimbursement values is 39.3 days. The median value is 30.

The chart in Appendix H summarizes how each surveyed department utilizes light duty for off the job illnesses or injuries and on the job illnesses or injuries. It indicates whether light duty is available and, if available, if it is voluntary or mandatory. For off the job illnesses or injuries, 23 of the 27 departments, utilize light duty. For on the job illnesses or injuries, 24 of the 27 departments employ light duty. Certain departments mandate light duty, while others allow it to be voluntary. For off the job illnesses or injuries, of the 23 departments that offer light duty, it is voluntary in 21 of the departments. For on the job illnesses or injuries, of the 24 departments that offer light duty, it is voluntary in only 3 of the departments.

DISCUSSION

The adverse affects of absenteeism on an organization was clearly documented and expounded upon in the literature. Burkell (1985) wrote that absenteeism results in the decreased effectiveness of training programs. When NFD personnel miss a training session due to absenteeism, it is rare for that employee to make up for the missed training. If the training was an

individual skill activity or a classroom session that was on videotape, the likelihood that the absent employee will participate in the missed training upon return to work is increased.

However, even under these conditions, a make up of the missed training is very often forgotten or simply not done. When the missed training activity is a company exercise or a class conducted that is not videotaped, the training is rarely, if ever, made up.

Burkell further stated that employees may start to view the taking of sick days as an entitlement rather than a benefit when absolutely needed. Even when an employee resists the temptation to utilize sick leave so as to get one's share, reduced employee harmony and overall poor morale often result from unchecked absenteeism.

The author would have liked to survey the personnel of the NFD in an attempt to illustrate if absenteeism is having these effects on the department. Unfortunately, because of the present state of labor/management relations, any survey that was developed and distributed would have been compromised by a poor rate of return. Additionally, the results from any survey could not have been relied upon. However sufficient empirical evidence exists to indicate that these adverse effects of absenteeism have surfaced in the NFD. It is not uncommon for this author to be informed of comments made by departmental personnel in referring to a co-worker's absence that "it was his turn today" or "I knew that was coming" or some similar comment. Additionally, a number of employees have openly questioned the present sick leave policy. In particular, these employees question the ability of the present sick leave policy in preventing excessive or abusive absenteeism.

Hagstrom (2000) indicated that another affect absenteeism can have on an organization is the employees who are working extra shifts to cover for absent co-workers can become overworked and overstressed. Once again, this author would have liked to develop a survey for

NFD personnel that could have dealt with these issues. In the absence of such a survey, it would seem, on the surface, that this should not be a major problem for NFD personnel. In the past three years, there has not been a single instance where an employee was forced to work overtime. Rather, through the use of a hireback procedure, every hireback was accepted on a voluntary basis. Therefore, it would seem that if an employee was overworked or overstressed that employee would decline the hireback.

Furthermore, for 2001, each employee on the NFD worked an average of 5.8, 24 hour hirebacks. For 2000 this figure was 2.6. Finally, for 1999, each employee on the NFD worked an average of 3.5, 24 hour hirebacks. Therefore, even in the year with the most hirebacks, each employee worked an extra shift less than once every two months.

From a budgetary standpoint, absenteeism can have a significant impact. Levy (2001) estimated that 17 percent of payroll costs can be attributed to absenteeism. For the NFD, this figure was considerably lower. As indicated in Appendix I, absenteeism accounted for 5.62% of payroll costs for 1999. This figure was 6.49% for 2000. For 2001, the figure rose significantly to 11.32%. Despite this lower percentage than Levy estimated, absenteeism has a significant impact on the NFD budget. The actual payroll cost that can be attributed directly to absenteeism for 1999 was \$178,332. For 2000 this figure was \$205,936. Finally, for 2001, this figure was \$359,185. Thus the average for this three year period was \$247,817 or 7.81% of the overall payroll expenditures. Clearly, even without taking into account the non-budgetary affects of absenteeism on an organization, absenteeism is an issue that needs to be aggressively addressed by NFD management.

The literature indicated that for a sick leave policy to be effective it is critical for certain components to be present. Hagstrom (2000) and Gentleman (1993) wrote that it is important for

a sick leave policy to discourage absenteeism. Several authors (Gentleman, 1993; McCormick, 2000; Skinner, 1953) felt that a reward mechanism for good attendance was also critical. Lawson (1990) stated the importance of the establishment and communication of reasonable attendance expectations by management. Frederiksen (1982) and Famularo (1986) stressed the importance of utilizing progressive discipline to control absenteeism.

The current NFD sick leave policy lacks each of these components. There is no reward for exemplary attendance. There is no real disincentive for frequent absences. The policy does require a medical certificate after a firefighter misses two or more continuous 24 hour tours of duty. However, once that employee has met the established \$250 medical deductible for the year, the cost of this physician visit is paid by the NFD. Therefore, other than the inconvenience of a physician visit, this particular requirement is not a major hardship for the employee. A second clause in the present NFD sick leave policy prohibits an employee who is on sick leave from the department from working a second job. This can impact employees that have a second job and therefore, provide an incentive for such an employee to avoid absences from the NFD. However, if an employee does not work a second job or has the capability to work that second job without detection while on sick leave, this clause has no impact that can serve as a disincentive to taking sick time.

The amount of sick leave utilized by NFD personnel as compared with 27 other local fire departments is clear evidence of the ineffectiveness of the current NFD sick leave policy. Appendix F summarizes the results obtained from the survey utilized by this author. For 1998 through 2000, NFD personnel utilized 67.9% more sick leave per person than the other 27 departments. The absenteeism for NFD personnel for 2001 was not included in Appendix F. However, when compared with the three year average of the 27 other departments, NFD

personnel utilized 235.7% more sick leave. Only one other department, Elk Grove Village FD, had a higher incidence of sick leave than the NFD.

It is interesting to note that Elk Grove Village FD does not reimburse an employee for accrued sick leave at retirement. As indicated in Appendix G, an employee forfeits any accrued sick days at retirement. Three other departments, Barrington FD, Skokie FD, and Wilmette FD also do not reimburse an employee for accrued sick days at retirement. Each of these departments experienced a significantly higher rate of absenteeism than the average rate of absenteeism of the 27 surveyed departments. This would appear to support the literature regarding the importance of a reward mechanism for good attendance.

In order to make the current NFD policy on absenteeism more effective, the lacking elements must be included in a revised policy. Specifically, the policy should have both incentives for good attendance and disincentives for poor attendance. As part of the disincentive measures, a progressive disciplinary element should be included in the policy. Finally, clear expectations regarding attendance need to be established and continuously communicated to all employees.

In an attempt to manage absenteeism, the overwhelming majority of the fire departments in Illinois allot a given number of allowed paid sick days/year. According to the IPFA Wages and Working Conditions survey, nearly 90% of the departments provide a definitive number of sick days per year. Of the 27 departments surveyed by this author, over 96% follow this policy.

In an attempt to provide a mechanism by which to reward non-use of sick time, 83% of the departments statewide that allow for accrual of sick days, offer a buyback provision. Similarly, 84% of the 27 surveyed departments that allow for accrual of sick days offer a buyback provision. If an employee is allowed to accrue sick days but is not offered a buyback

provision, there would be little to discourage the employee from utilizing the accrued sick time before retirement.

An additional mechanism practiced by some departments to encourage an employee on sick leave to return to full duty as quickly as possible is to place the absent employee on light duty. As indicated in Appendix H, for off the job illnesses or injuries, 23 of the 27 departments, utilize light duty. Of these 23 departments, only 2 make light duty mandatory. In the remaining 21 departments, light duty is voluntary for the absence employee. For on the job illnesses or injuries, 24 of the 27 departments use light duty. However, the issue of whether light duty is mandatory or voluntary for on the job illnesses or injuries is in direct opposition to off the job illnesses or injuries. Light duty is mandatory in 21 departments and voluntary in only 3.

This author has a difficult time understanding this approach. The vast majority of firefighters would much prefer to work on a 24/48 shift schedule than an 8/40 schedule. This is substantiated by the prevalent practice of departments needing to offer premium pay to personnel to entice them to volunteer for assignments that require an 8/40 schedule. Therefore, most employees do not embrace a light duty assignment. By mandating light duty for on the job illnesses or injuries and making it voluntary for off the job illness and injuries, it appears that preferential treatment is being afforded to off the job illnesses or injuries. It is this author's opinion that each should be treated equally or the reverse should be true.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The adverse affects that absenteeism has on an organization can only be avoided with an effective sick leave policy. It has become apparent to this researcher that the current NFD sick leave policy is highly ineffective. The NFD suffers from a significantly higher rate of

absenteeism than that of other local departments. The present NFD policy lacks the components necessary for a policy that manages sick leave in an effective manner.

As management negotiates a revised policy, it is this author's recommendation that the following elements be incorporated into the policy:

- The policy must allow for progressive discipline for excessive or abusive absenteeism. Incorporated into this portion of the policy should be a mechanism or mechanisms management can utilize to monitor for flagrant abuse of absenteeism. For example, management could reserve the right to place a telephone call to the absent employee's home. If the absent employee is not home and is not seeking medical care, management would discipline the employee. This would serve to confine an employee to home and accomplish two objectives. Firstly, it would aid in the speedy recovery of the ill or injured employee. Secondly, it would help ensure that the employee is not utilizing sick time for unwarranted activities.
- The policy must establish or effectively communicate expectations regarding employee attendance. Most departments allocate a specific number of sick days/year to each employee and allow for accrual of the unused sick days. The problem with this is that if a buyback is offered for the unused accrued sick days there is naturally a financial liability to the employer. If no buyback is offered, this tends to encourage employees to utilize accrued days even when they are not ill.
- The policy must contain disincentives for utilizing sick leave. If an employee suffers no penalty when absent, there is little to discourage this type of behavior. A possible disincentive that could be instituted by the employer is that when an employee is absent that employee only receives a portion of their pay. The intent of this would be to financial

impact the absent employee to discourage absenteeism and encourage good attendance.

An alternative to this approach could be to allow an employee to utilize vacation time when absent and thus maintain their full pay.

A second disincentive that, in this author's opinion, is critical to employ in a sick leave policy is the use of mandatory light duty for all employees on sick leave. Obviously, clearance from a physician would be necessary before an employee on sick leave is assigned to light duty. However, the prospect of light duty on an 8/40 work schedule would undoubtedly serve as motivation for the employee on sick leave to return to full duty.

- The policy must contain incentives for excellent attendance. For example, if an employee does not utilize sick leave during a given year, that employee would be entitled to a financial reward. As a means to limit the financial liability to the employer of this incentive, the money to fund this program could be derived from the money saved in only paying a portion of an absent employees salary.

Prior to negotiations with the NFD firefighters' union regarding a policy on absenteeism, management must develop a comprehensive policy on absenteeism that incorporates these components. Once that policy is proposed, the firefighters' negotiating team will have the option to accept it wholly or in part. Any changes that management consents to should not compromise the basic tenets of a sound sick leave policy that have been discussed and recommended.

Once a modified sick leave policy has been agreed upon and instituted, further research needs to be conducted. Specifically, the rate of future absenteeism and the effectiveness of the policy should be closely monitored and evaluated. If management determines that any

modifications to the policy are necessary, these revisions should be proposed during future negotiations.

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APPENDIX A (Medical leave policy)

601 MEDICAL LEAVE

The Village of Niles provides medical leaves of absence to employees who are temporarily unable to work due to a medical disability. For purposes of this policy, medical disabilities include, but are not limited to, illness, injury, temporary disabilities associated with pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions.

Medical Disabilities, Sick Leave, and Off-the-Job Injuries. Medical leave may be allowed only in cases when the regular full-time employee is actually affected by a medical condition as defined above. Medical leave may terminate when the employee is physically able to perform their duties in the position held prior to the medical disability or off-the-job injury. The Village will pay up to a maximum of 26 weeks at full salary for any one medical disability or off-the-job injury to employees with six months or more of service with the Village. The Village will pay up to a maximum of 13 weeks at full salary for any one medical disability or off-the-job injury with less than six months service with the Village. In order to be granted medical leave pay, the employee must meet the following conditions:

- a. Notify their Department Head or authorized representative at the designated time set by the Department Head, in accordance with department policy.
- b. File a written request for medical leave in the manner prescribed by the Village. If requested by the Department Head, submit a weekly medical progress report signed by a physician and estimating the length of disability.
- c. Permit such medical examination, or other inquiry which the Village deems necessary and desirable.
- d. Upon the employee's return to work, the employee must complete the necessary forms as established by the Village's procedures. At this time the Department Head may require a certificate signed by the doctor stating that the employee is physically able to perform their duties in the position held prior to the disability.
- e. The Village will pay the maximum number of weeks allowed at full salary based on the length of service with the Village as stated above. At the end of the maximum allowed disability leave, the pay will cease and the employee must be able either to return to their old position, apply for a disability pension, request an unpaid leave of absence, or be terminated. However, the Village of Niles cannot guarantee reinstatement in all cases.
- f. Falsely claiming a disability due to medical disability or injury shall be cause for discharge.
- g. An employee who is absent from their Village duties because of illness or injury whether their status is medical leave, worker's compensation or leave without pay (because of illness or injury), shall not work outside their Village employment.
- h. Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, the Village will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full period of the approved medical leave.
- i. A medical certificate is required for any medical absence of 3 days or more. For Sworn Fire personnel, a medical certificate is required after two or more continuous 24 hr. tours of duty. Proof of medical treatment shall be from the employee's physician, at the employee's expense. The Department Head may request a medical certificate for any medical absence

of one day or more. Failure to produce a medical certificate when requested, will result in loss of compensation for that day(s). A copy of all medical certificates must be forwarded to the Personnel Office.

It is the responsibility of the Department Head to monitor individual absences and take appropriate disciplinary action as necessary.

On-the-Job Injuries. All employees are protected by the Worker's Compensation Act in the event they sustain an injury or illness occurring in the course of employment with the Village of Niles. In order to be granted worker's compensation, the employee must meet the following conditions:

- a. Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses must report it immediately, no later than the end of their work shift, to the respective supervisor regardless of degree of injury or illness. The employee must complete the Incident/First Aid Report and forward it to the supervisor. Any employee who fails to do so, may be subject to disciplinary action. When an Incident/First Aid Report is submitted, the supervisor should then forward it to the Personnel Office.
- b. Minor injuries may be treated in the field or office when an employee qualified to administer first aid is present and a first aid kit is available.
- c. If the incident results in injuries that require medical/hospital treatment, the employee should be taken to a Medical Management Network Facility. In the event that medical care beyond first aid is required, the supervisor must complete the Employer's First Report of Injury (Form IC45), and the Supervisor's Investigation Report and immediately forward to the Personnel Office.
- d. In the event of loss of time caused by the incident, such loss of time will be reported to the Personnel Office. When an employee returns to work after a lost time incident, this must also be reported to the Personnel Office.
- e. To receive compensation, the employee must submit weekly progress reports, signed by the treating physician and estimating when the employee can return to work. Upon return to work, the employee must provide a certificate signed by the treating physician stating that the employee is physically able to perform their duties in the position held prior to the injury.
- f. On-the-job injury leave shall terminate when the treating physician issues a certificate that the employee is physically able to perform their duties in the position held prior to injury. Any disability claimed in excess of that indicated by the doctor shall be considered unauthorized.
- g. When an employee has been injured in the course of employment, the Village will pay their full salary, less the amount the employee will receive from Worker's Compensation, for a period not to exceed 52 weeks (one year). At the end of the 52 weeks, the pay will cease and the employee must be able either to return to their old position, apply for a disability pension, request an unpaid leave of absence or be terminated.
- h. Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, the Village will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full period of the approved leave.

- i. An employee who is absent from their Village duties because of illness or injury whether their status is medical leave, worker's compensation or leave without pay (because of illness or injury), shall not work outside their Village employment.
- j. Should an employee experience recurrence of a previously reported incident, they shall report it to their supervisor who shall report it to the Personnel Office.
- k. All correspondence relating to any employee's worker's compensation claim should be immediately forwarded to the Personnel Office.
- l. All related expenses (medical bills, prescription bills, medical supply bills, physical therapy bills etc.) should be forwarded to the Personnel Office and shall not be applied to the Village's group medical insurance.

APPENDIX B (Amended medical leave policy)

AMENDED MEDICAL LEAVE BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AT VILLAGE BOARD MEETING ON JUNE 22, 1999

Six (6) Month Sick Policy Clarification

When the Village of Niles initially established the six (6) month non-duty injury sick policy, the intent was to provide protection for the employee and his/her family against the event of catastrophic illness. At the time of implementation, recovery time was much longer for many illnesses such as heart attack or gallbladder surgery than today.

The Village does not intend to change the policy. However, the policy was never intended to be available to employees to provide unlimited “*sick time*” for colds, stomachaches, sprains, bruises and other minor ailments incurred in the course of every day living. While the Village does pay employees for time off for these incidents, it does not expect the privilege to be abused by the employees. Chronic abuse by an employee of 1, 2 or 3 day absences will not be acceptable or tolerated by the Village. These chronic absences preclude many departments from performing daily missions effectively.

- Individuals who, at the discretion of the Department Management, Village Manager, Human Resources; and, ultimately, the Mayor, are deemed to be abusing the absence policy, will be dealt with appropriately up to and including termination of employment.
- For example, Department Heads may conclude that sick leave is being abused when a suspicious pattern of sick leave usage exists (i.e. Fridays, Mondays, and the days before and after holidays) or where the employee’s use of sick leave exceeds the average number of days taken by other Village employees.

The above language does not mean that someone who uses more sick leave than the Village average is automatically deemed an abuser. It does mean, however, that the Department Heads will look closely at such situations.

APPENDIX C (Survey fax cover sheet)**NILES FIRE DEPARTMENT****8360 Dempster Street****Niles, IL 60714****(847) 588-6800****FAX: (847) 588-6850****FAX COVER SHEET**

DATE: November 12, 2001
TO: Fire Chief
DEPARTMENT: Fire
FROM: Barry Mueller, Deputy Chief

NUMBER OF SHEETS (including this cover sheet): 5

MESSAGE: Chief, please find an attached cover letter and survey. Your prompt response would be greatly appreciated. Please don't hesitate to call with any questions you may have. Thank you.

APPENDIX D (Survey cover letter)

NILES FIRE DEPARTMENT
8360 DEMPSTER STREET
NILES, ILLINOIS 60714

FAX: 847-588-6850 PHONE: 847-588-6800

November 12, 2001

Dear Fire Chief:

I have recently completed my third course of the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. One of the requirements of the program is that, after each course, every student must complete a comprehensive applied research project. This survey is part of my project on absenteeism. I would greatly appreciate it if you would complete this survey and return to me as soon as possible. The questions asked refer to your policy as it pertains to shift personnel. In advance, I thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Barry Mueller
Deputy Chief

APPENDIX E (Survey)

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Department: _____

Contact person: _____

Telephone number: _____

Number of uniformed employees: _____

1. How many paid sick days do you provide annually? (If you do not provide paid sick days, please skip to Question 6)

_____ Do not provide sick days _____ Days/annually

2. For which of the following reasons is the use of sick days permitted?

_____ Employee illness/injury _____ Spouse illness/injury

_____ Child illness/injury _____ Parent illness/injury

_____ Grandparent illness/injury _____ Grandchild illness/injury

_____ Medical appointment _____ Dental appointment

_____ Child's medical appointment _____ Child's dental appointment

_____ Additional vacation time _____ Personal business

3. What is your policy regarding sick days accrued but not taken during the year?

_____ Carried over for future use _____ Unused time is paid

_____ Unused time is forfeited

4. What is the maximum number of sick days an employee can accrue?

_____ No limit _____ Up to _____ days

5. What is your policy regarding sick days accrued but unused at the time of an employee's retirement?

_____ Employee forfeits unused sick days

_____ Employee is paid in full for unused sick days

_____ Employee is paid for a portion of unused sick days

_____ Employee is allowed to covert all unused sick days into compensatory time off

_____ Employee is allowed to covert a portion of unused sick days into compensatory time off

6. When an employee is absent, at what point is a physician's statement required?

_____ After any use of sick days

_____ After _____ continuous days of absence

7. In your opinion, how effective is your present policy in controlling usage of sick leave?

_____ Extremely effective

_____ Moderately effective

_____ Average

_____ Moderately ineffective

_____ Extremely ineffective

8. What is the average number of sick days used per employee per year?

_____ 1998

_____ 1999

_____ 2000

9. In your opinion, what percentage of the total sick days utilized would constitute abuse of your sick leave policy?

_____ 0%-20%

_____ 21%-40%

_____ 41%-60%

_____ 61%-80%

_____ 81%-100%

10. Do you offer light duty to employees on sick leave with off the job injuries/illnesses?

_____ Yes (please indicate whether mandatory or voluntary)

_____ No

_____ Mandatory

_____ Voluntary

11. Do you offer light duty to employees on sick leave with on the job injuries/illnesses?

_____ Yes (please indicate whether mandatory or voluntary)

_____ No

_____ Mandatory

_____ Voluntary

12. Is sick leave time considered as hours worked in computing overtime compensation?

_____ Yes

_____ No

13. Do the questions asked in this survey adequately detail your sick leave policy?

_____ Yes

_____ No (please describe below)

Describe: _____

14. Do the questions asked in this survey adequately address any incentives or disincentives contained within your sick leave policy that are designed to limit absenteeism?

_____ Yes

_____ No (please describe your policy below)

Describe: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please fax the completed survey to:

Niles Fire Department

Attention: Barry Mueller

Fax: (847) 588-6850

APPENDIX F (Sick leave usage)

Number of sick days used/year/employee

Fire Department (FD)	1998	1999	2000	Average
Arlington Heights FD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Barrington FD	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.3
Buffalo Grove FD	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Deerfield Bannockburn FPD	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Des Plaines FD	3.6	3.6	4.3	3.8
Elk Grove Village FD	7.2	6.8	6.2	6.7
Franklin Park FD	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Glencoe FD	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Glenview FD	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.8
Highland Park FD	3.8	3.1	3.0	3.3
Hoffman Estates FD	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.8
Lake Forest FD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lake Zurich FD	N/A	N/A	3.0	3.0
Lincolnwood FD	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.5
Lincolnshire – Riverwoods FPD	N/A	1.8	1.3	1.6
Morton Grove FD	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9
Mount Prospect FD	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Mundelein FD	1.0	3.5	1.3	1.9
Northbrook FD	4.5	4.1	4.3	4.3
North Maine FPD	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Park Ridge FD	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.6
Rolling Meadows FD	N/A	N/A	1.5	1.5
Schaumburg FD	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.8
Skokie FD	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8
Wheeling FD	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Wilmette FD	3.4	3.2	3.8	3.5
Winnetka FD	2.2	1.1	1.3	1.5
Average	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.8
Niles FD	4.6	4.3	5.1	4.7
Amount above/below average	1.7	1.5	2.4	1.9
Percent above/below average	58.6%	53.5%	88.9%	67.9%

APPENDIX G (Accrual/reimbursement of sick days)

Fire Department (FD)	Paid sick days/year	Maximum number of accruable sick days	Reimbursement of accrued sick days at retirement	Maximum number of reimbursable sick days at retirement
Arlington Heights FD	12	240	Paid at 10%	24 ^a
Barrington FD	6	53	Forfeits	0
Buffalo Grove FD	5	100	Paid at 100%	100 ^a
Deerfield Bannockburn FPD	6	60	Paid at 50%	30 ^a
Des Plaines FD	6	45	Paid at 25%	11 ^a
Elk Grove Village FD	12	60	Forfeits	0
Franklin Park FD	4	6	Paid at 100%	6
Glencoe FD	6	Unlimited	Paid at 50%	90 ^a
Glenview FD	Unlimited	N/A	N/A	0
Highland Park FD	6	Unlimited	Paid at 50%	90
Hoffman Estates FD	6	Unlimited	Paid at 25%	45
Lake Forest FD	12	Unlimited	Paid at 40%	144
Lake Zurich FD	6	120	Paid at 50%	60 ^a
Lincolnwood FD	0	0	N/A	0
Lincolnshire – Riverwoods FPD	6	120	Paid at 33%	40
Morton Grove FD	6	25	Paid at 50%	13
Mount Prospect FD	4	48	Paid at 50%	24 ^a
Mundelein FD	6	100	Paid at 50%	50
Northbrook FD	6	48	Paid at 30%	14
North Maine FPD	4	40	Paid at 100%	40
Park Ridge FD	6	105	Paid at 15%	16
Rolling Meadows FD	6	75	Paid at 100%	75 ^a
Schaumburg FD	6	96	Paid at 75%	72
Skokie FD	6	60	Forfeits	0
Wheeling FD	6	72	Paid at 100%	72 ^a
Wilmette FD	6	Unlimited	Forfeits	0
Winnetka FD	6	90	Paid at 50%	45
Niles FD	Unlimited	N/A	N/A	0

^a Accumulated sick leave value is converted into insurance premiums.

APPENDIX H (Light Duty)

Fire Department (FD)	Light duty – off the job illness or injury	Voluntary or mandatory (off job)	Light duty – on the job illness or injury	Voluntary or mandatory (on job)
Arlington Heights FD	Y	V	Y	M
Barrington FD	Y	V	Y	M
Buffalo Grove FD	Y	V	Y	V
Deerfield Bannockburn FPD	N		Y	M
Des Plaines FD	Y	V	Y	M
Elk Grove Village FD	Y	V	Y	M
Franklin Park FD	N		N	
Glencoe FD	Y	M	Y	M
Glenview FD	Y	M	Y	M
Highland Park FD	Y	V	Y	M
Hoffman Estates FD	Y	V	Y	M
Lake Forest FD	Y	V	Y	M
Lake Zurich FD	Y	V	Y	V
Lincolnwood FD	N		Y	V
Lincolnshire – Riverwoods FPD	Y	V	N	
Morton Grove FD	Y	V	Y	M
Mount Prospect FD	Y	V	Y	M
Mundelein FD	Y	V	Y	M
Northbrook FD	Y	V	Y	M
North Maine FPD	N		N	
Park Ridge FD	Y	V	Y	M
Rolling Meadows FD	Y	V	Y	M
Schaumburg FD	Y	V	Y	M
Skokie FD	Y	V	Y	M
Wheeling FD	Y	V	Y	M
Wilmette FD	Y	V	Y	M
Winnetka FD	Y	V	Y	M
Niles FD	Y	M	Y	M

Y – Yes

N – No

V – Voluntary

M - Mandatory

APPENDIX I (Absenteeism Costs)

	Overtime due to absenteeism	Salary paid to absent employees	Total
1999 (actual amount)	\$68,528	\$109,804	\$178,332
1999 (% of total NFD compensation)	2.16%	3.46%	5.62%
2000 (actual amount)	\$90,102	\$115,834	\$205,936
2000 (% of total NFD compensation)	2.84%	3.65%	6.49%
2001 (actual amount)	\$198,604	\$160,581	\$359,185
2001 (% of total NFD compensation)	6.26%	5.06%	11.32%
Ave. (actual amount)	\$119,078	\$128,590	\$247,817
Ave. (% of total NFD compensation)	3.75%	4.06%	7.81%